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Leesta

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LEESTA

Revolutionary Education. Inspired By Women.

Abstract

Leesta is an edtech company that teaches 3rd-5th graders American History through the stories of women. Our team is creating modules for different women who changed history. Essentially we are making it easy and fun for children, parents, and educators to access more inclusive history education resources. Each module will focus on the life of one woman, but will cover common American history topics making it easy for teachers to include in their current lesson plans.

With the sponsorship of the University of Michigan Libraries we further researched Bessie Coleman, Dolores Huerta, and Grace Lee Boggs. As well as finding solutions to avoid copywriting obstacles and learning Zotero, an organizational tool we have implemented as we continue to research.



Objectives

- Giving children the tools of empathy and cultural competence
- Preparing them to engage with diverse perspectives and understand their value
- Creating sophisticated illustrations worthy of kids' attention



Illustration of Bessie Coleman flying her J-9 plane over a 1920s Chicago skyline. (Shane Achenbach /Leesta)

Challenges

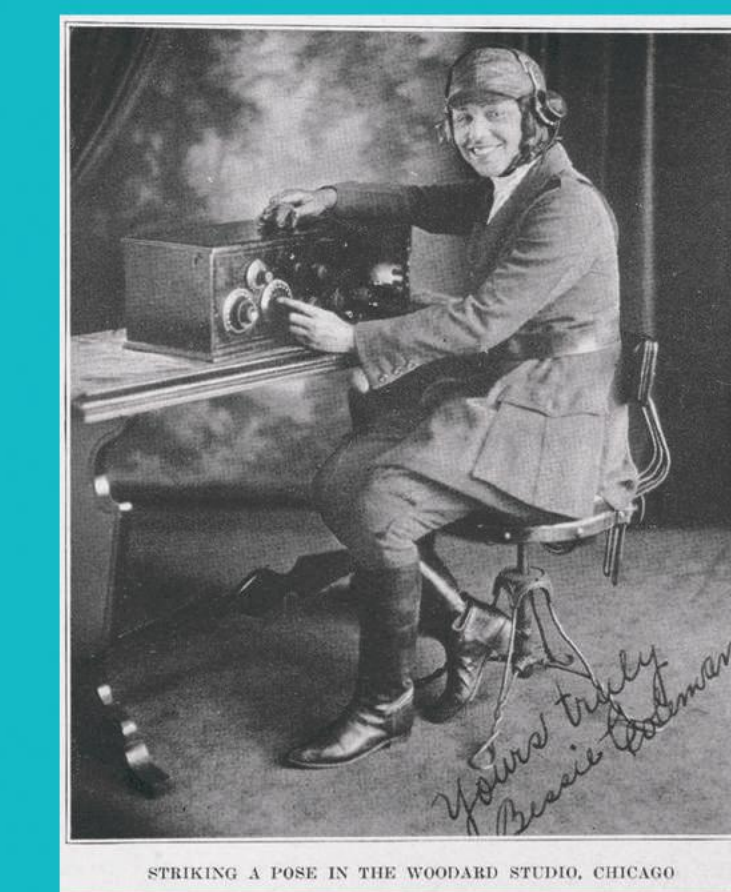
- Incorporating historical materials in our resources
- Abiding to copyright laws especially when dealing with images
- Finding materials published before 1923 which all public domain works
- Turning the visual material we have found in the archives into digital illustrations.

Real-Life Impact

Leesta will bring the stories of women who have changed history to children all across the country. We are providing a more inclusive, engaging, and more accurate version of history than what children currently have access too. With Leesta young girls from all different backgrounds will be able to see themselves reflected in the history they are being taught, and all children will have a richer understanding of how this country came to be.

Library Partnership

The partnership with the Library has allowed us to stay true to our goal of bringing high quality resources in a format that is understandable by 8-11 year olds. Having access to the resources like images, documents, and microfilms pertaining to the women has allowed us to bring college level research to children and parents that do not have the same accessibility to those materials

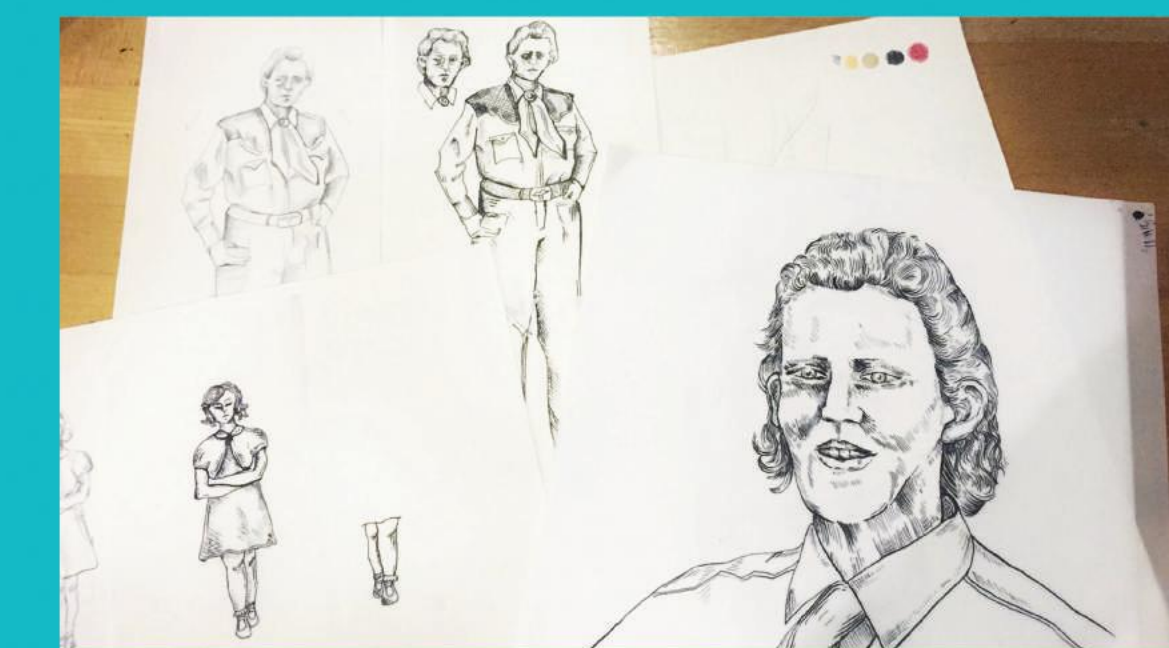


Bessie Coleman photograph from the NY PUBLIC LIBRARY DIGITAL COLLECTIONS



Dolores Huerta documents from Wayne State University UFW collection.

With the mini-grant we will access some copy-written images, as well as being able to pay one illustrator to interpret the research into a full illustrated biography.



Sketches for the Temple Grandin illustrations.(Stephanie O'Neil /Leesta)



Dolores Huerta illustration. (Virginia Lozano/ Leesta)

What We Learned

While doing research for Leesta we are also reteaching ourselves history because the materials we are trying to bring to the attention of children are often stories that are not taught in depth. As college students a lot of the details of the women we are focusing on are new to us and we have been learning as we go.



Dolores Huerta at a meeting with Cesar Chavez
Photo Credit: Walter P. Reuther Library



Grace Lee Boggs with her husband and freinds.
Photo Credit: Walter P. Reuther Library

Next Steps

- Creating more illustrations and programing the game
- Continuing to test with children
- Furthering our research with library resources

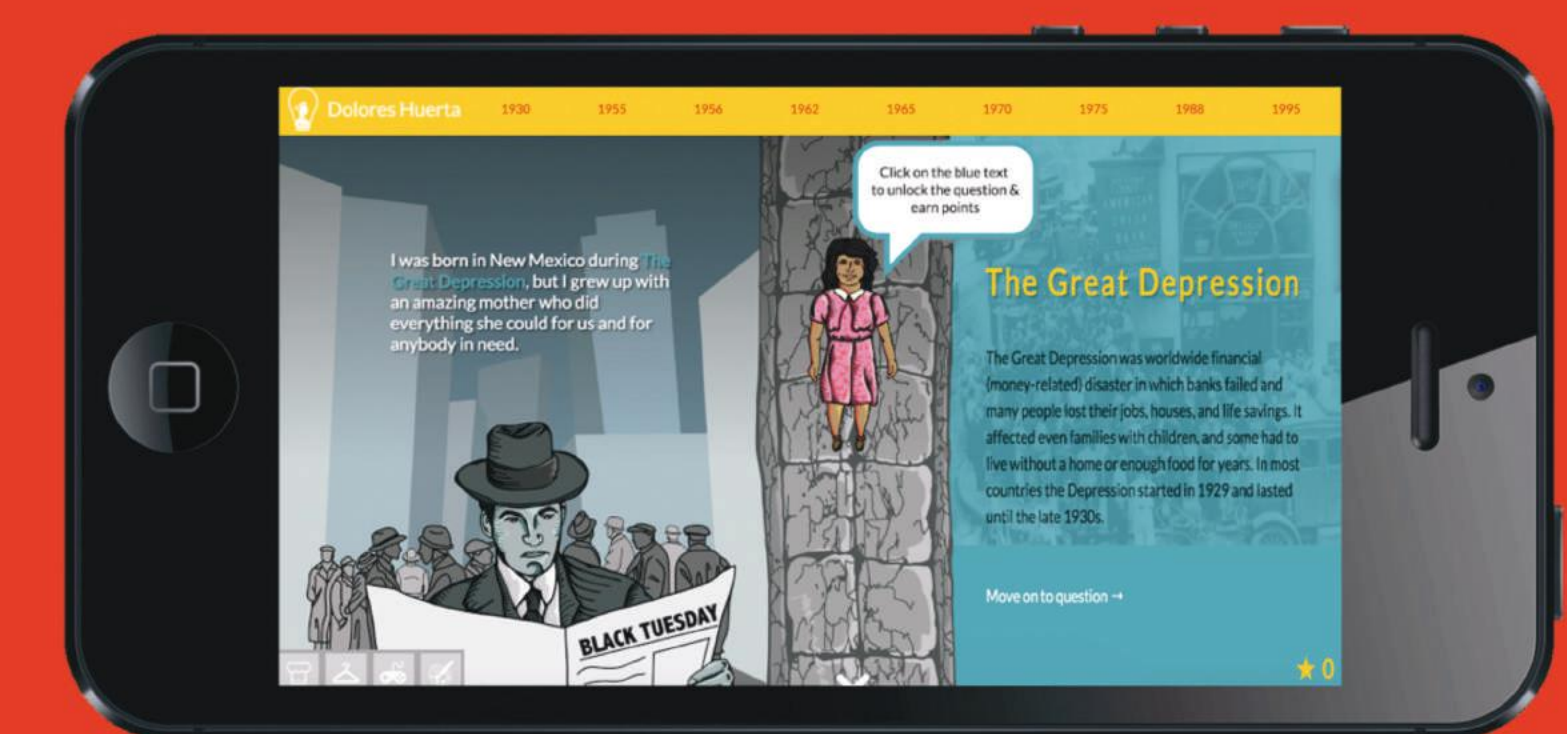


Illustration of the Dolores Huerta Leesta game on a mobile phone.
(Virginia Lozano /Leesta)